



HIGH STREET, LEATHERHEAD

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE
(MOLE VALLEY)**

20 JUNE 2007

KEY ISSUE:

To consider the outcome of a review of the new waiting restrictions (8.00am to 6.30pm Monday to Saturday) within High Street and part of Church Street, Leatherhead, following their introduction six months ago.

SUMMARY:

In association with the Local Office our partnership organisations Mole Valley District Council, Leatherhead and District Chamber of Commerce, and Leatherhead Tomorrow have undertaken a review of the town centre business and user groups to assess the success of the new waiting restriction introduced in September 2006 to the High Street and part of Church Street, Leatherhead.

An assessment of the level of compliance with the restriction has also been undertaken by examination of the ticketing deemed necessary.

The town centre businesses are split 50/50 about the restriction from the response received, whilst the users are strongly in favour and the ticketing shows that transgressors have declined.

Although some peripheral issues were highlighted notably the need for a reduced speed limit, the restriction can be considered a success achieving its objectives within the High Street, and it has contributed to a net environmental benefit in the town centre.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to:

- i. note that the new waiting restriction introduced in High Street and Church Street, Leatherhead on 1 September 2006, is successful, it has the acceptance of High Street users, is generally supported by traders, has improved highway safety at this location by reducing obstruction and conflict and is on-balance contributing towards an improved town centre environment;
- ii. note that as part of the Leatherhead waiting restriction review consideration will be given to adjust the waiting restriction finish time from 18.30 to 18.00;
- iii. agree that Officers progress a 20 mph speed limit for High Street and Church Street, Leatherhead (lengths as defined in the waiting restriction Order); and
- iv. that authority be delegated to the Local Highways Manager in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and local Member to advertise the necessary Traffic Regulation Order to consider any objections received and subject to those objections make the Order associated with the above speed limit variation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Committee agreed at its meeting on 13 March 2006, that Officers develop viable solutions to the problems being encountered within High Street, Leatherhead, consult with the Leatherhead Working Group, and implement the resultant outcome.
- 1.2 Officers' considered representations made to both the County and District Councils, met with interest groups and other stakeholders before taking a proposal to the Working Group on 31 May 2006, to address the main immediate problem of highway safety and obstruction created by all day parking within the High Street, Leatherhead.
- 1.3 The Working Group received the Officer presentation and considered the proposal before agreeing to maintain the existing Pedestrinised Zone (10.00am to 4.30pm Monday to Saturday) and to progress and advertise a new waiting restriction within the High Street, the operational hours of the restriction being 8.00am to 6.30pm Monday to Saturday.
- 1.4 The Traffic Regulation Order (17/8/GEN/MV/AK) was advertised in June 2006 and consideration of all the objections and or representations received associated with the advertisement took place on 17 July 2006. That meeting concluded that the advertised order be made and brought into force as soon as practicable in accordance with the regulations; the order was duly made with effect from 1 September 2006.
- 1.5 The new waiting restriction is being enforced by an increased number of parking attendants already enforcing parking restrictions elsewhere in Mole Valley as part of the Decriminalised Parking Enforcement regime operated by Mole Valley District Council for Surrey County Council under agreement. Enforcement of moving traffic offences remains the domain of the Police.
- 1.6 From the outset it was considered that an operational review of the new waiting restrictions should take place six months after their introduction to ensure they were addressing the highway safety and obstruction problems originally encountered within High Street, Leatherhead.

2.0 ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

- 2.1 The review process was undertaken directly by our partnership organisations in conjunction with the assistance of Officers from the Local Office. The principal parties involved were Mole Valley District Council's Town Centre Manager, and Parking Manager, the Leatherhead and District Chamber of Commerce, and Leatherhead Tomorrow; the help and assistance given by all was greatly appreciated.
- 2.2 There were three elements to the monitoring exercise: first, a business survey looking at the impact of the waiting restrictions on businesses, which was undertaken by the Town Centre Manager and Leatherhead and District Chamber of Commerce. Secondly, a user survey organised by Leatherhead Tomorrow in association with the Local Office. Thirdly, information about contraventions and enforcement provided by the Parking Services Manager.

The Business Survey

- 2.3 The Town Centre Manager and Leatherhead and District Chamber of Commerce distributed and followed up on the 137 questionnaires issued to businesses in the town centre; they received 45 returns (33%).
- 2.4 Businesses were asked whether the changes had affected business and if so how, whether they were happy with the present arrangements, would they like changes before 10.00am, pedestrianised zone (10.00am to 4.30pm) or after 4.30pm and what changes would they suggest.
- 2.5 There seems to be a 50 – 50 split when asked whether the changes had affected their business and only about third indicated they were unhappy with the present arrangements, with approximately a third indicating possible changes after 4.30pm, although opinion is mixed about the changes.
- 2.6 External to the results it was also noted that Argos in particular receive significant deliveries after 4.30pm, the market remains an issue, as does the Abbey corner and speed within High Street, and overnight parking can hamper early morning deliveries in the town centre.

The User Survey

- 2.7 Leatherhead Tomorrow organised, distributed and conducted on-site surveys of users to the town centre at different times of the day and on different days to get a variety of reactions to the changes. The questions were simple and neutral, encouraging people to make their own individual responses. They obtained 274 completed responses with two thirds of those responding indicated an affiliation to a local organisation of which they were a member, i.e. a residents association or similar.
- 2.8 Responses were from a cross section of age groups, with about an even gender split, three-quarters were from the KT22 post code area, three-quarters were aware of the changes, three-quarters believe it is better than before and over 50% visit the town centre twice a week or more frequently; half of those responding eat in the town centre and or 90% shop.
- 2.9 When asked about which time period they visited the town nearly two-thirds of respondents declined to answer, but of those that did the majority seemed to undertake their visit before 4.30pm.
- 2.10 When asked about where vehicles should park if permitted, there was no firm or clear expression of opinion, which reflects the problem of reaching a consensus about defining appropriate vehicle parking areas within the High Street.
- 2.11 'Pop and Shop', i.e. up to 30 minute free parking, within the High Street was raised by some respondents as an issue. However, there are now more available car parking spaces close to the town centre than before with the extension to Randalls Road car park.

Enforcement

- 2.12 The Parking Manager reported that enforcement commenced in September 2006 and the area is regularly patrolled during the hours of operation of the new waiting restriction to monitor compliance with the regulations.
- 2.13 From the beginning of September 06 to the end of March 07, 328 tickets were issued, approximately 46 per month, nearly 70% of tickets were paid and 12% cancelled.
- 2.14 However, over the last four months February to May 07, the number of tickets being issues has declined to about 26 per month, with nearly 80% of tickets being paid and less than 10% cancelled.
- 2.15 The most common reasons given for an appeal against the issue of a ticket are:
- They did not know the restrictions had changed.
 - They did not see the signs.
 - The signs were unclear and or too small to see/read.
- 2.16 Most enforcement takes place before 6.00pm and it is noted that few offences occur between 6.00pm and 6.30pm. Therefore, as part of the Leatherhead waiting restriction review consideration can be given to modify the restriction to finish at 6.00pm rather than 6.30pm.
- 2.17 Additionally Parking Manager also notes that a lot of people are very positive about the restrictions and that opening and closing of the barrier is also working well.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The removal of all day vehicular parking from within High Street, Leatherhead, has reduced conflict with pedestrian movements and reduced obstruction of premises thereby contributing to the built environment.

5.0 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The level of ticketed enforcement has reduced over the last four months as more people observe the restrictions.

6.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Mole Valley Access Group and Seeability in particular support the change, which has removed the conflict for vulnerable road users.

CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

On balance the new waiting restriction has achieved its objectives to improve highway safety and reduce obstruction within the High Street and Church Street without completely alienating town centre businesses and with the support of town centre users.

The review has highlighted the restriction could finish at 6.00pm rather than 6.30pm, there is difficulty in obtaining a consensus about providing suitable parking spaces within High Street (when permitted) and identified issues with the Farmers Market, vehicle movement and speeds near Abbey corner and evening/overnight parking.

Therefore, the end time should be reviewed together with other local restrictions and a 20mph speed limit should be considered.

Officers will also continue to work in association with our partnership organisations to seek to introduce further incremental improvements within the town centre.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:
